



European Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

COC Netherlands

Out & Proud?

LGBTI Asylum in Europe
Conference
Amsterdam, 5-6 October 2017



CENTRE FOR GENDER
AND SEXUALITY

KRITERION

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The locations

Kriterion Movie Theatre

The Kriterion Movie Theatre is the main location of the conference. The participants register here for the conference as well as for the different parallel sessions. Also the plenary program will take place in Kriterion.

Kriterion is a non-hierarchical organisation that is completely run by students.

Roeterseiland Campus (REC), University of Amsterdam

The University of Amsterdam offered us the workshop rooms at the Roeterseiland Campus of the University. The Faculties of Economics and Business and Social and Behavioural Sciences are located at the Roeterseiland campus. The Faculty of Law recently moved to the campus. During the conference the workshops and some of the presentations will be held here. Volunteers will guide you to the different rooms.

Thursday, October 5th, 2017

Plenary Program @ Kriterion theatre

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09.00 – 09.20 Opening	4
<i>Tanja Ineke, Chair COC Netherlands</i>	
<i>Liza Mügge, Director of Amsterdam Research Centre for Gender and Sexuality</i>	
<i>Sabine Jansen, Asylum researcher COC Netherlands</i>	
Refugee story	
09.20 – 10.10 Key note speech – Thomas Spijkerboer	
<i>Gender, sexuality, asylum and European human rights.....</i>	
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10.30 – 12.00 Panel discussion – Reception Conditions	5
<i>Chair: tba</i>	
<i>Panelists: Suus te Braak, Erwin Brugmans, Marty Huber, Avalon Leupen</i>	
Lunch @ REC – De Brug Café	
13.00 – 14.30 Presentation – Supporting trans* people through the asylum process	6
<i>Presenter: UKLGIG</i>	
14.45 – 16.15 Panel discussion – Transgender Refugees	5
<i>Chair: Sophie Schers</i>	
<i>Panelists: Jessica Burton, Paul Dillane, Richard Köhler, Fernanda Milán</i>	
16.30 – 17.00 Wrap-up meeting.....	4
<i>Drinks at Kriterion Café</i>	

Workshops @ Roeterseiland Campus (REC), University of Amsterdam

Registration at Kriterion from 8.30

Round T1 | 10.15 – 11.45

- 1. Discrimination & Challenges – Amani Zreba** **9**
Room C 2.04
- 2. Interpreting the unspoken – Jan Beddeleem** **9**
Room C 1.05

Round T2 | 13.00 – 14.30

- 3. Detention of LGBTI asylum seekers in UK and EU – Paul Dillane.....** **10**
Room JK B.18
- 4. Building Rainbow Bridges – Jonathan Mastellari** **10**
Room JK B.22

Round T3 | 14.45 – 16.15

- 5. The soul of revolutionary organising – Miles Rutendo Tanhira.....** **10**
Room JK B.26
- 6. – José Renkens** **11**
Room JK B.18
- 7. Mind the gap – Pascale Navarra** **11**
Room JK B.22

Friday, October 6th, 2017

Plenary Program @ Kriterion theatre

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09.20 – 10.10 Lecture	6
<i>Presenter: Louise Hooper</i>	
10.30 – 11.00 Panel discussion – Legal issues in EU Member States	5
<i>Chair: Thomas Spijkerboer</i>	
<i>Panelists: Paul Dillane, Aino Gröndahl, Sabine Jansen</i>	
 <i>Lunch @ REC – De Brug Café</i>	
13.00 – 14.30 Paper session 1	7
<i>Chair: Ashley Terlouw</i>	
1a. Establishing a sexual identity	
<i>Presenter: Andrea Gustafsson Grønningsæter</i>	
1b. Gender identity, asylum law & the ECHR doctrine	
<i>Presenters: Victor Merino Sancho, Thomas Spijkerboer, Petra Sußner</i>	
14.45 – 16.15 Paper session 2	8
<i>Chair: Maarten den Heijer</i>	
2a. Late Disclosure in Spain	
<i>Presenters: Paula Ibáñez, Lucía Muñoz</i>	
2b. Elaborating on the challenges facing LGBT asylum seekers	
<i>Presenter: Luke Hamilton</i>	
16.30 – 17.00 Wrap-up meeting	4
<i>Drinks at Kriterion Café</i>	

Workshops @ Roeterseiland Campus (REC), University of Amsterdam

Registration at Kriterion from 8.30

Round F1 | 10.30 – 12.00

- 8. Non-monosexual asylum seekers – Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh** **12**
Room JK 3.85
- 9. Holding hands: working with trans asylum seekers – Fernanda Milán** **12**
Room JK 3.88A
- 10. Navigating the gap – VUMc**..... **13**
Room JK 3.88B

Round F2 | 13.00 – 14.30

- 11. LGBTI asylum seekers in Cyprus – Fatema Islam**..... **13**
Room JK B.18
- 12. Support and acceptance of LGBT asylum seekers and refugees – Movisie** **13**
Room JK B.22

Round F3 | 14.45 – 16.15

- 13. “Say that you are gay to come to the UK” – Maddalena Tacchetti & Paschal Bagonza** . **14**
Room JK B.18
- 14. Her existence – Jessica Burton**..... **14**
Room JK B.22
- 15. Setting up a self-organisation – Thiemo Raoul Bischof** **15**
Room JK 1.26

Plenary

Opening

Tanja Ineke, Chair COC Netherlands
Liza Mügge, Director of ARC-GS
Sabine Jansen, Asylum Researcher COC Netherlands

Gender, sexuality, asylum and European human rights

Thomas Spijkerboer

Keynote speech

Refugee stories

Maha, and Mohammed

During the conference two refugees will present their personal stories. They will talk about their own experience as a LGBTI refugee. The stories are scheduled at the start of both days of the conference in Kriterion.

Wrap-up meeting

Host of the day

Both days we will have a short wrap-up meeting in which we will learn the outcome of the workshops and meetings we did not attend. After that we will have drinks together in the Kriterion Café.

Panel Discussions

Reception Conditions

Thursday, 10.30 – 12.00

Chair: tba

Panelists: Suus te Braak, Erwin Brugmans, Avalon Leupen

During this panel discussion Suus te Braak (COC Netherlands), Marty Huber (Queerbase) Avalon Leupen (COA Netherlands), and Erwin Brugmans (Secret Garden Amsterdam) will talk about different reception conditions for LGBTI asylum seekers. Also, they will discuss best practices. An important topic is the separate housing of LGBTI asylum seekers.

Transgender Refugees

Thursday, 13.00 – 14.30

Chair: Sophie Schers, Transgender Network Netherlands

Panelists: Jessica Burton, Paul Dillane, Richard Köhler, Fernanda Milán

Transgender refugees have different needs from LGB asylum seekers. This is partly caused by the visibility of gender-non-conforming gender expressions. This will be discussed by Lady Jessica Burton (Color Pink Group, TAMPEP), Richard Köhler (TGEU) and Paul Dillane (Kaleidoscope Trust). What are differences between the LGB group and the T(I) group of refugees?

Legal issues in EU Member States

Friday, 10.30 – 12.00

Chair: Thomas Spijkerboer, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Panelists: Paul Dillane, Aino Gröndahl, Sabine Jansen

This panel discussion is about the legal practices in different EU member states after the Fleeying Homophobia research and the XYZ and ABC judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union. The panel is formed by Sabine Jansen (COC Netherlands), Paul Dillane (Kaleidoscope Trust), and Aino Gröndahl (RFSL).

Presentation

Thursday 13.00 – 14.30 | Kriterion

Supporting trans* people through the asylum process

Leila Zadeh, Executive Director UKLGIG

This workshop draws on UKLGIG's experience to help participants identify the needs of trans* asylum seekers, (including gender recognition, health, safety, detention, specialist accommodation, and other support challenges), challenges they face in the asylum legal process, and overlaps with trafficking. It explores ways and shares good practice to provide support (including peer support), do's and don'ts, and possible advocacy objectives.

The workshop is suitable for those new to working with trans* asylum seekers, including those who have worked with LGB asylum seekers previously but not trans*, and those who have no experience.

Lecture

Friday 9.20 – 10.10 | Kriterion

Louise Hooper, Garden Court Chambers, London

Information Follows

Paper session 1

Friday 13.00 – 14.30 | Kriterion

Chair: Ashley Terlouw

1a. Establishing a sexual identity

The Norwegian immigration authorities practice in sexuality based asylum cases

Andrea Gustafsson Grønningsæter, Institute for Social Research, Oslo

The question of sexual minorities' right to obtain refugee status on the basis of their sexual orientation is an area of refugee law that has undergone several changes over the last couple of years. Studies have shown that lesbian, gay and bisexual asylum seekers are often excluded from the asylum institute, either overtly by not being recognised as Convention refugees, or implicitly through State practice. Despite a growing legal recognition that sexual minorities may constitute a 'particular social group' in accordance with the Refugee Convention, sexual minorities still face specific judicial and procedural obstacles when applying for asylum. One of the central challenges that lesbian, gay and bisexual applicants face in the asylum procedure is establishing the credibility of their sexual orientation. This paper looks at how the Norwegian immigration authorities assesses claims for refugee status based on the applicant's sexual orientation through a case study of 187 Norwegian asylum cases from 2010-2015. Based on the case study the paper analyses how concepts such as sexual orientation or, as it is increasingly formulated in national guidelines and decisions, sexual identity is understood by the immigration authorities. Furthermore, the paper discusses how the Norwegian practice relates to recommendations in international sources, such as UNHCR's Guidelines on Claims to Refugee Status based on Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity.

1b. Gender identity, asylum law & the ECHR doctrine

Victor Merino Sancho, Department of Public Law Rovira i Virgili University (Spain)

Thomas Spijkerboer, Vrije University Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Petra Sußner, University of Vienna (Austria)

We will present an ongoing research about an asylum claim raised by a transgender and how the ECHR case-law allows us to find reasons to grant asylum. To do so, we discuss some different reasonings about transgender identity and human rights law and doctrine.

Paper session 2

Friday 14.45 – 16.15 | Kriterion

Chair: Maarten den Heijer

2a. Late Disclosure in Spain

Cases in the Asylum Office of Spain and Spanish Tribunals

Lucía Muñoz Blanco (Legal adviser on Asylum Law at a Spanish NGO)

Paula Ibáñez Díez (Case-officer at Asylum Office of Spain)

This paper discusses the reasons and consequences of late disclosure in the asylum application system. The methodology we will use is to analyze a specific asylum case in the Spanish International Protection system, considering that Spain is one of the southern-border countries of the European Union. This means that we have to deal with several specific circumstances in terms of “hot spots” such as Ceuta and Melilla.

Through our experience as both case-officer and asylum lawyer, we have noticed that late disclosure is a significant issue in the study of LGBTI asylum applications. The fact that both of us, the authors, work in the same field yet in opposite roles, should enrich the study of this relevant matter at hand.

We will provide a comprehensive study based on a specific real case. Moreover, we want to share the challenges we face in our daily work, for instance:

- Reasons: context of the first interview at the border and in the territory (privacy during the interview); language barriers, lack of knowledge of the importance of certain data; fear of asylum seekers; lack of training of the interviewers; interiorized homophobia; etc.
- Consequences: lack of credibility based on stereotypes, contradictions, "call effect" and subjective notions; risk of "refoulement"; lack of exhaustiveness in terms of COI; lack of evidence; assessment on the delay of the asylum application, etc.

In addition to highlighting the difficulties in managing late disclosure, such as those mentioned above, we will also be pleased to offer some guidelines or new paths in order to enhance the current assessment of late coming out.

2b. Elaborating on the challenges facing LGBT asylum seekers

Asylum procedures and reception conditions in Ireland

Luke Hamilton, Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre

People applying for international protection in Ireland on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity face particular challenges in two key areas of the Irish asylum system. Firstly, the controversial reception system known as ‘Direct Provision’ is blind to the needs of LGBT people, and secondly, international protection decision-making on LGBT cases in Ireland seems to be centred on an approach to credibility that is inconsistent and at odds with international guidelines. This has engendered a uniquely adversarial environment for LGBT persons in need of international protection. There are no standardised guidelines for either the Reception and Integration Agency (which has responsibility for accommodation of asylum seekers) or the International Protection Office (which conducts first-instance international protection status determination) setting out best practice for working with LGBT asylum seekers in a sensitive and protection-oriented manner.

This article seeks to examine the extent to which issues in Irish policy and practice around the separate but intertwined areas of reception and asylum procedures have a disproportionately negative impact on LGBT asylum seekers. The first section will analyse the legal and policy framework that governs Ireland’s approach to LGBT asylum seekers. This is relevant in light of Ireland’s newly-enacted asylum legislation, the International Protection Act (2015), and the State’s piecemeal approach to the European Union’s Common European Asylum System. The second section will place that framework in context by drawing upon the insight of LGBT asylum seekers themselves to ascertain whether or not gaps in policy are reflected in the lived experiences of the people concerned. It is hoped that the findings will support recommendations for Irish authorities to ensure that the needs of LGBT people are accounted for in all aspects of the asylum process.

Parallel program

1. Discrimination & Challenges

Thursday, 10.30 – 12.00 | Room JK B.26
Amani Zreba, Quzah Libya LGBT Group

The challenge of Living in Christian society as LGBT refugee isn't this easy, in Italy people are still not accept the homosexuality completely and gay marriage is exist since last year, and there is also homophobia and racist, and for Arab migrant who live in Italy they can't accept the homosexuality as a natural thing as long as they live in Italy since years.

We face many challenges for example:

the lack of LGBT asylum seeker rights and privacy, we still try and negotiated with the commune from some years to open a house and a Center for the asylum seekers because increased the number of the asylum LGBTI and they have to deal with episodes of discrimination, homophobia, transphobia, bullying and in many cases violence by the guests living with them within the reception facilities.

And many cases had recorded and followed by our association "IO".(IMGRATION AND HOMOSEXUAL).

The "world of refugees" is small. With this I mean that the gay asylum seeker who escaped from persecution, violence and discrimination comes to the Reception Center and clashes with the world he had fled from: sometimes he meets the villagers and is often forced to live the suffering again When he gets the permit and the approval of the asylum application. This means that during a year (or sometimes evens more, because of the number of international protection requests), homosexuals learn to deny their sexual or gender identity and hide it cautiously. Although in Italy I have found more freedom and more rights, Homophobia and Transphobia is still strongly rooted in our daily lives.

Another challenge we do is with migrants and especially for me with the Arab migrants who live in Italy they can't accept the homosexuality as a natural thing as long as they live in Italy. Other refugees from south of Africa like Uganda and Nigeria who I met, they still can't speak up about their sexual orientation or gender identity in the Reception Center (or the camp) where they live or out with the people who have the same nationality that they have. This is because of the lack of the programs to integrate the migrants in Italy and incorporation human rights in general.

The third challenge for the LGBTI asylum seeker is the integration into the Italian LGBTIQ community and get involved in the actives and speak up about their self. As an isolated group, many LGBT asylum seekers and refugees can be reluctant to talk about their sexual orientation and/or gender Identity to organizations and individuals, as well as to peers. Many of them identified that this was due to the stigma that surrounded these issues in their home countries.

2. Interpreting the unspoken

Thursday, 10.30 – 12.00 | Room C 1.05
Jan Beddeleem

Interpreting for gender identity and sexual orientation related asylum demands is challenging. The asylum seeker is fleeing a situation where taboo, stigmatization and criminalization meet each other. So called traditional values overruled humanity and the refugees are often limited in their capacity to talk about it openly and detailed. The protection officers need to verify facts and credibility. The interpreter is situated in between two parties with very different registers to talk about the subject. The 'privileged' protection officer has a background and a glossary, the stigmatized refugee has often nothing but bad experience by naming the taboos, and speaking out freely.

The good practice: In 2012-2013 and 2016-2017 the Office of Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless persons trained over 150 interpreters to be prepared for interpreting gender and sexual orientation related asylum claims.

In this presentation we give insight and take a closer look on the challenges and needs of interpreters when it comes to situations where the unspoken is dominantly present: sexual orientation and gender identity issues during refugee status determination interviews.

Can silence speak if there are no words to be found for what a claimant has gone through and who can interpret that silence? How to translate the questions based on detailed concepts of a protection officer into a language with very few references to talk about sexual taboos. And how to handle metaphors and encoded language at the instant moment of the interview. How can interpreters, often emerged from the same culture and grown with the same taboos care for themselves, becoming aware of their own taboos and build up a glossary of terms, definitions and expressions, useful to be prepared for a professional interpretation in all cases.

During the presentation we share the findings and lessons learned, with examples that focus on those areas where refugees are emerging from, because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

3. Detention of LGBTI asylum seekers in UK and EU

Thursday, 13.00 – 14.30 | Room JK B.18
Paul Dillane

4. Building Rainbow Bridges

Thursday, 13.00 – 14.30 | Room JK B.22
Jonathan Mastellari, MigraBo LGBTI

Background: One of the main questions related to LGBTI refugees is their reception, accommodation and inclusion in host societies. Initially under-researched, this aspect is steadily gaining importance among practitioners, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). First and foremost, these issues concern asylum seekers and refugees themselves, who are those truly experiencing difficulties and challenges in the country of asylum. A question that has emerged is whether designing ad hoc reception centres for LGBTI refugees would be a viable option to provide applicants with a safe haven, or whether solutions of this kind risks turning into ghettos, thus exacerbating stigmatisation and differences. Reception centres for LGBTI refugees have recently been established in Berlin, for example, but also Italy is now witnessing the creation of these structures. Besides reception and accommodation, a primary issue is that of integration of LGBTI refugees into the host societies, with all the consequences related to finding jobs, housing, social networks and further on. Notably, the term 'integration' itself triggers some reflections as to what it entails since it is sometimes indicated as a sort of panacea to deal with refugees and host communities. When it comes to LGBTI refugees, integration becomes an even more slippery concept requiring additional thinking and specific expertise.

Aim: The workshop is aimed at stimulating discussion and debate on topics related to the reception, accommodation and inclusion of LGBTI refugees, especially among NGOs, volunteers and refugees themselves dealing with these issues in their daily lives and activity. Taking stock of the existing challenges, the workshop would like to be a forum to share good practices and examples of feasible solutions to respond to the needs and aspirations of LGBTI refugees, at the same time showcasing the potential of informal and grassroots movements.

5. The soul of revolutionary organising

Thursday, 14.45 – 16.15 | Room JK B.26
Miles Rutendo Tanhira, Queerstion Media

Context

As activists we are so often faced with the dilemma of overworking, burn out and exhaustion when organizing in our different capacities. We often forget the "self" and concentrate a lot on our work, strategies and plans. As we do that we often do not pay attention to ourselves and we slowly wear

away and tire. We usually are never free to explore ourselves deeply, to enjoy the curiosity and delight provoked by the space, to risk and abandon our positions. We are afraid to be regarded as “unprofessional.” We often neglect that space where we should laugh, cry or just be, and to place our innermost thoughts on the table. We often need to be reintroduced to a world many of us have forgotten – a world of knowing who we are and acknowledged the pain, anger, laughter, joy we have buried and shared some skills to address it.

Justification

Heart-body-mind is an innovative strategy that puts activists’ wellbeing, integrity and safety at the centre of sustained organizing. The strategy is informed by a careful reading of our contexts and an understanding of how power operates in both the personal and public realms. Activists face threats, intimidation, arrest and torture for their work. Religious extremists and conservatives everywhere stigmatize activists advocating for equality and justice for all.

It’s easy to put work at the centre of our lives. But along the way we can lose sight of the whole system, of ourselves, of the essence of that which connects us as human beings. In the name of professionalism we become isolated; we lose our creativity, audacity, energy and love of our work. The work itself loses meaning and we end up feeling perpetually angry, anxious over deadlines, fatigued and lonely. The process will help many of us realize that it is legitimate to bring who we are into the work we do. What we need is to create organisations with a soul.

We must start with the belief that the struggle to eliminate homo- bi- and transphobia and inequality must involve work on one’s own self. To take care of ourselves, know how to defend ourselves.

6. TBA

Thursday 14.45 – 16.15 | Room JK B.18
José Renkens

More information follows.

7. Mind the gap

Thursday, 14.45 – 16.15 | Room JK B.22
Pascale Navarra, Queeramnesty Switzerland

There is a huge number of organisations with professional knowledge of asylum and refugee issues.
There is a huge number of organisations with professional knowledge of LGBTI issues.
There is a gap in between.

How can both, asylum and LGBT issues and knowledge be connected?
Who’s responsibility is it to link them together?

Queeramnesty has extensive experience in supporting LGBT asylum seekers and refugees in Switzerland. The support is given by a large number of volunteers and activists. Swiss government does not consider the LGBT refugee issues a governmental responsibility: There is no statistical data about the number of LGBT asylum applicants – they are subsumed under the category of gender based reasons of flight (Geschlechtsspezifische Fluchtgründe). They are not considered exceptionally vulnerable. Sexual orientation or gender identity are not recognised as a persecution ground, not even if the country of origin is criminalising it. LGBT asylum seekers have no specific accommodation or services. They are often housed in detention centers distant from LGBT life and therefore denied access to services or LGBT organisations. There are no complaint procedures for harassment in the centers. There are no specific informations in the reception and detention centers at all. Lawyers and legal offices are not sensitized on LGBT issues. The interviews with the migration authorities are led by persons lacking any specific knowledge and the translators are not trained on that topic or language. The asylum procedure between arrival and decision takes between 3 months and 4 years.

8. Non-monosexual asylum seekers

Friday, 10.30 – 12.00 | Room JK 3.85
Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh

Non-monosexual asylum seekers, are among the most discriminated groups in all steps of their immigration process. Running from societies and countries affected by monosexism, they face UNHCR, European local immigration offices and representors, and LGBT refugee related organizations (rights advocates and aide providers) impacted by the monosexual dichotomies themselves. This leads these bodies to commit severe discriminatory acts which sometimes can go as far as non-monosexual asylum seeking demands' refusal. Studies on this issue have already been published in few universities, and some cases covered by media; yet, there is no proactive advocate movement for defending the human rights of non-monosexual individuals, especially those who run away from the countries where same sex sexual conduct is criminalized.

In this workshop, we will review the non-monosexual asylum seekers conditions and different life experiences, with a focus on Iranian non-monosexual refugees living in Europe or wanting to live in one of the European countries.

Then, we discuss the steps to create an international network to collect more specific information on this matter in different countries by local organizations, enabling organizations to launch an advocacy movement protecting the non-monosexual immigrants human rights in Europe.

9. Holding hands: working with trans asylum seekers

Friday 10.30 – 12.00 | Room JK 3.88A
Dodo Karsay, Richard Köhler, Fernanda Milán, Samyar Shooshian

During the asylum process, trans asylum seekers are going through what is probably the most difficult time in their lives. Because of their gender identity they might be facing additional challenges other (LGB) refugees might not face. But, also afterwards the work for LGBTIQ communities does not stop, as trans refugees are here to stay. Local LGBTIQ groups in Europe need to develop long-term strategies and address how to build communities inclusive of trans refugees. This workshop is aimed at supporting local activists (and others) in being better equipped in this effort.

There are a number of factors you should be aware of when you supporting trans asylum seekers. LGBTIQ communities might need to reflect on internalised structures that can easily turn into barriers in working with trans asylum seekers, such as racism, xenophobia, but also simply a lack of diversity within a local community. On the other hand, trans asylum seekers often find themselves isolated and lonely, which is often a pathway to vulnerability and making bad decisions. Being in a new country, they may not speak the language, know how to get around, how to navigate this new home. But many have also been activists before and have a potential contribution to make to their new communities.

It is important that local groups have strategies in working with trans asylum seekers. To this end, this workshop will address common questions and concerns, principles to guide the work of activists, practical steps of social support and general tips.

Anyone is welcome who wants to know more about practical ideas about better supporting trans asylum seekers and refugees.

The workshop will be led by Fernanda Milán, trans refugee from Guatemala, living in Denmark. Co-led by Samyar Shooshian, trans refugee from Iran, living in Hungary. Supported by Richard Köhler, TGEU and/or Dodo Karsay, consultant.

10. Navigating the gap

Tailoring information about rights, procedures and access to services to needs of LGBTQ-refugees

Friday 10.30 – 12.00 | Room JK 3.88B

VUMc:

Maaïke Muntinga, Department of Medical Humanities

Tim van de Griff, Department of Medical Psychology, Center of Expertise on Gender Dysphoria

Muhammed Al-tamimi, School of Medical Sciences

Petra Verdonk, Department of Medical Humanities

Together with field partners and in active collaboration with LGBTQ-refugees, we carried out a project to develop a tailor-made information guide containing LGBTQ-specific content about rights, access to legal and health services, and the asylum procedure. We organized four round-the-table meetings with LGBTQ-refugees to discuss their experiences with applying for asylum in the Netherlands. During the meetings, we specifically focused on needs and experiences related to information, such as a perceived lack of information, perceived barriers in receiving useful or accurate information, and good practices. The guide's content was based on both the outcomes of these meetings and official information distributed by (government) institutions and organizations. We found that institution-issued information did not always match individual LGBTQ-refugees' experiences in practice, or was not always perceived as intended by the institution. LGBTQ-refugees mentioned that information about LGBTQ-specific rights and services had not always reached them. This had resulted in a lack of awareness about pivotal issues at a time when they had needed this information most. In addition, LGBTQ-refugees mentioned that opportunities to pursue rights were limited due to local circumstances in the application centers and AZC's, and that available services were not always tailored to their needs. As a result of this mismatch between institutional aims and lived realities, we experienced barriers when aiming to provide useful, need-based information to LGBTQ-refugees: we found ourselves navigating between the 'system world' and the 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1987). We conclude that institutional and administrative claims related to rights, procedures and access to services may not always reflect actual individual experiences of LGBTQ-refugees. This suggests gaps in the way in which information is tailored and distributed, regulations are carried out in practice, and services meet the needs of potential users.

11. LGBTI asylum seekers in Cyprus

Friday 13:00 – 14:30 | Room JK B.18, Future world centre
Fatema Islam

12. Support and acceptance of LGBT asylum seekers and refugees

Needs, experiences and good practices in the Netherlands.

Friday, 13.00 – 14.30 | Room JK B.22

Jolanda Elferink, Movisie

Michelle Emmen, Movisie

This study represents the start of the Epsilon project, the Erasmus + KA2 Programme of the European Union, in which we cooperate with Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Great Britain and the Netherlands to develop a face-to-face training and an e-learning module, to equip professionals for supporting LGBTI refugees. The focus of the Dutch research is on LGBT asylum seekers – people who came to the Netherlands or to Europe and are still waiting for their residence status – and on LGBT newcomers and refugees with a legal status, with a non-European origin and having arrived in the Netherlands during the last 2 years. The main question *'what are the needs of LGBT asylum seekers and refugees and the professionals and volunteers who work with them, with regard to increasing the support for and acceptance of those LGBT people, and what are the experiences with interventions that contribute to this goal? Do the people involved feel these interventions work, and what could work according to literature?'* has been researched by means of:

- A Dutch literature search for existing good practices in the field of support to LGBT asylum seekers and refugees, and what works to increase acceptance according to literature.
- A qualitative field study in which we interviewed three LGBT asylum seekers and four refugees about their experiences with and need of support and acceptance, and two focus groups with seven professionals and six volunteers in which we raised the same questions.

Results and recommendations were presented in an National Report and ebook in Spring 2017.

13. “Say that you are gay to come to the UK”

Friday, 14.45 – 16.15 | Room JK B.18

Maddalena Tacchetti & Paschal Bagonza

This workshop aims at increasing awareness of the challenges associated with setting up from scratch a support group for LGBT+ asylum seekers and to explore the aids and benefits they might receive from a well-settled aid organization, which tackles their specific needs and whose management is member-inclusive oriented. We hope this workshop will be not just a source of inspiration and information, but also a way to share experience and knowledge of activism for and with LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees.

Drawing on our joint personal experience as main founders and volunteers of Pride Without Borders (PWB), in this workshop we will outline the main steps and challenges of our journey towards becoming the main organization supporting LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees in the city of Leicester and Leicestershire, UK.

The workshop will focus on four main areas: Case Support Work, Inclusive Management, Networking and Fundraising. PWB offers a variety of social and support activities for its members, such as accompanying them to court hearings and Home Office interviews, running weekly drop-ins, attending Gay Pride Parades and other LGBT+ events that help members build up vital evidence to prove their sexual orientation and gender identity to the Home Office. We will present few case studies on this latter aspect, to show possible drawbacks associated with the “production of evidence” and ways to tackle them.

Another main and unique aspect of PWB is that, since its inception, its management has been member-inclusive oriented. That is, among the main founders and volunteers they are not just British and European activists but also LGBT+ asylum seekers, refugees and allies. We will stress the importance of having such contributions in the management of this type of support groups as well as the legal and social challenges that might raise from it.

PWB’s community has expanded radically since the beginning (growing from as little as 6 members to over 40), due to the extensive networking through, among other things, our social media platforms. Networking has proved to be indispensable in training volunteers, supporting members as well as raising vital funds. The latter aspect remains one of our major challenges. We will share our successful fundraising stories as well as impediments and ways we are trying to overcome them.

14. Her existence

Friday, 14.45 – 16.15 | Room JK B.22

Jessica Burton, TAMPEP, Netherlands

Community of Transgender Refugee in the Nederland are often cornered into the **SEX-WORK industry**, which most transgender has experience from their country of birth. We identify sex-work as a source of employment but it become worrying/harsh when it becomes the only solution for Transgender Refugee to make a living.

Without a positive result/decision from IND, many transgender are force to (1) go back to country of birth (2) flee and live without permit, hence they are force to reckon with harsh environment which can be critical, without no access to insurance, healthcare, education and employment. In order to survive this wilderness, they have to tap into their survival mode (animalist behaviour).

There is a gap in how many Transgender are documented at the three main AZC entry points **Budel, Schiphol and Ter Apel**, while not understanding for some transgender in their native/ home countries they can't do a name or sex change, which can lead to improper documentation. Currently no proper protocol is created to document transgender/ transgender sex-workers refugee in the Nederland at the entry points and on the ground.

A data collection of twenty (25) transgender refugee through Gendertalent has shown critical condition of transgender living on the AZC's and other shelters being (violent attacks, verbal abuse, reject), for transgender to conduct sex-work, they have to do it **illegally**, only EU citizen, non-EU citizen with a EU work permit are permitted to do sex-work, the third party (**pimps**) that own's motels/ windows they have to ensure that the employee (**transgender Refugee**) has permit to work in the EU (Nederland). On the other hand trans sex-workers don't not understand laws and policy to conduct sex-work in each Gemeente.

May 2017 Gendertalent Nederland through Ms. Jessica Burton Talent Programme Manager for Transgender Refugee, has conducted an recreational and therapeutic session with 12 Transgender/ Transgender sex-worker, the result show that refugee transgenders without permit are in need of mental healthcare, trauma, legal aid and **finance help** to keep up with the demand of how society dictates how a "woman or man" should look like. Information was gather by PROUD, RED UMBRELLA, MAMA CASH, P&G292, Trans Netwerk Nederland (TNN), Gendertalent and Data Collection of thirty (30) transgender/ trans sex-worker refugee in the Nederland.

Gendertalent has an exciting mentorship programme for transgender, the aim is to expand this service to the biocultural transgender/trans sex-workers with partnership of VU Medical Centre, Trans United, P&G292, PROUD, Psy8 and Trans Netwerk Nederland.

In the end, we will have a lot of undocumented transgender living in the Nederland, which can increase major social problem, example criminal activities.

15. Setting up a self-organisation

Friday, 14.45 – 16.15 | Room JK 1.26

Fedaa Alarnaoot, Queer Base

Cécile Balbous, Queer Base

Thiemo Raoul Bischof, Queer Base

Setup

1. Short presentation of Queer Base (15 minutes)

- History – How it all started – Queer Base in the Viennese context of LGBTIQ activism
- Implementation – Cooperation - Networks
- Obstacle – Alliances - Perspectives
- Questions and Answers – Sharing best practices

2. Work in small groups on how to export the Queer Base's model to other countries

- Country situation (size, inhabitants, legal situation on LGBTIQ Rights, political situation)
- Existing organization (local, national)
- Situation of refugees and asylum-seekers
- Presentation of the work in small groups
- Reflexion about the presentations

3. Summary of the workshops to be presented on the panel

Dramatis Personae

Fedaa Alarnaoot

Fedaa Alarnaoot studied Political Science at Damascus University, Syria. He's been working with Queer Base since 2015 as a translator and an interpreter (Arabic / English / German), as a social counsellor for the LGBTIQ refugees from the Arabic countries.

Paschal Bagonza & Maddalena Tacchetti

Maddalena is a PhD student at the University of Leicester Business and Management School; Paschal is a PhD student at the faculty of Health and Life Sciences, School of Applied Social Sciences, Division of Social Work, of the De Montfort University (Leicester). Both their PhD researches focus on the everyday lives and challenges of a group of LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees living in Leicester. They are among the main founders and volunteers of Pride Without Borders (PWB), which is a social enterprise based in Leicester entirely run by (forced) migrants and British volunteers, which provides support and advice to LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees whose claim rests on their LGBT+ status.

Cécile Balbous

Cécile Balbous studied Translation and conference Interpreting in France and in Austria. She's a long time LGBTIQ activist in Vienna and one of the founders of Queer Base. Her work at Queer Base focuses on translation (French / German / English / Spanish), social and legal counselling and coordination.

Jan Beddeleem

Jan Beddeleem is a Belgian expert in the field of international solidarity with LGBT in countries with anti-gay laws and in the position of LGBT in the Belgian Alien Law. Belgian expert for the research project "Fleeing Homophobia, Asylum claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe" of COC Netherlands and VU University of Amsterdam (S. Jansen and T. Spijkerboer - 2011). By profession a social worker in a repatriation centre for illegal migrants (detention center). Beddeleem was the trainer of the interpreters and speaks on his own behalf.

Thiemo Raoul Bischof

Thiemo Raoul Bischof completed law degree in Vienna and Amsterdam, focusing on fundamental and human rights issues as well as anti-discrimination and equal treatment law. Currently legal adviser for the NGO Queer Base and employee of the Austrian Parliamentary Directorate. Thiemo, together with colleagues from the volunteer association queerconnexion, holds workshops at educational institutions on the subject of sexual and gender diversity, and is engaged in the Vienna Law Clinic and Amnesty International Austria. Thiemo is also an enthusiastic Asthanga-Yogi.

Aino Gröndahl

Aino Gröndahl is asylum lawyer at RFSL (*Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights*). Aino works as a public counsel and a legal aid for LGBTIQ asylum seekers and undocumented people. She wrote the first legal thesis in Sweden on the subject of sexual orientation and gender identity as asylum claims. She represents and advises hundreds of LGBTIQ refugees in Sweden every year, and gives trainings to asylum rights and human rights activists, as well as to the Swedish migration authorities' LGBTIQ experts.

Andrea Gustafsson Grønningseter

Andrea studied law at the Faculty of Law in Oslo, and wrote her master thesis as a part of the project 'Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation in International and National Law' at the Department of Public and International Law (<http://www.jus.uio.no/ior/english/research/projects/transgender/>). The topic of her master thesis is the practice of the Norwegian immigration authorities in regards to the credibility assessment in asylum claims based on sexual orientation (the thesis was delivered in the summer of

2016). After delivering the thesis she has been working as a research assistant at the Department of Public and International Law and the Institute for Social Research in various projects regarding migration and anti-discrimination law.

Luke Hamilton

Luke Hamilton is a Legal Officer with the Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre; PhD Candidate in Refugee Law at the School of Law of the National University of Ireland Galway, LLM in International Human Rights Law from the Irish Centre for Human Rights & BA in Psychology / Chinese from University College Cork. Luke's doctoral research focuses on the role of vulnerability in international protection procedures, with a focus on credibility assessment

Louise Hooper

Louise Hooper is a barrister at Garden Court Chambers, London, specialised in asylum, human rights and immigration. Together with Livio Zilli (ICJ) she researched and wrote [Refugee Status Claims Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: A Practitioners' Guide](#), International Commission of Jurists, 2016.

Tanja Ineke

Tanja Ineke is the chairperson of COC Netherlands

Fatema Islam

Fatema Islam is a trained social worker. Being inspired by her own lived experience, she has been involved in the field of social and gender justice activism in Cyprus since 2005 and has closely worked with refugees, migrants and LGBTI individuals of diverse backgrounds. At present, she carries out the role of a project coordinator and social worker for the rehabilitation services offered to the torture survivors by Humanitarian Affairs Unit of Future Worlds Center.

Sabine Jansen

Sabine Jansen graduated in law from the University of Amsterdam. She was the initiator and main researcher of the report *Fleeing Homophobia, Asylum Claims Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Europe*, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4ebba7852.pdf>, which she carried out together with Thomas Spijkerboer of VU University Amsterdam and 25 national and other experts. In 2014 she drafted a report for ILGA-Europe: *Good practices related to LGBTI asylum applicants in Europe*, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5433a8124.pdf>. She was involved in the gay asylum cases XYZ and ABC at the EU Court of Justice. Currently, she performs a research on LGBTI asylum practice in the Netherlands, on behalf of COC Netherlands.

Dodo Karsay

Dodo Karsay is a trans non-binary advocate, working as a researcher and consultant. Their main areas of focus include trans and LGBTQI issues, asylum, and disability. In the past ten years they have supported numerous international human rights and LGBTQI organizations, including Transgender Europe, ARC International, and OutRight Action International. In 2016 Dodo authored TGEU's brochure [Welcome to Stay – Building Trans Communities Inclusive of Trans Asylum Seekers and Refugees](#).

Richard Köhler

Richard Köhler oversees Transgender Europe's policy and advocacy work at the European level including the organisation's advocacy work on asylum. He regularly speaks at institutions of the European Union and the Council of Europe. He has been a sought expert on trans equality in Europe by policy makers and trans activists alike.

Jonathan Mastellari

Jonathan Mastellari is LGBTIQI spokesperson at MigraBo LGBTI. MigraBo LGBTI is a non-profit association based in Bologna, Italy, since 2012. MigraBo aims at helping migrants, asylum seekers and refugees self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, “queer” and intersexual coming from any country in the world. MigraBo works to help them integrate in Italy and in the Italian LGBTIQI community. The association consists of a network of organizations dealing with migration issues based in Bologna and in the nearby area. One of the primary services offered by MigraBo is providing help in filling out the asylum application form. Moreover, MigraBo delivers training on the topic of LGBTI refugees to academics, practitioners and volunteers and organises social events to promote the inclusion of LGBTI refugees and MigraBo’s work. All services provided by MigraBo are free of charge and guarantee the anonymity of the people involved. All people working at MigraBo do so on a voluntary basis.

Victor Merino Sancho

Víctor Merino received his PhD in Law from the Human Rights Institute, Universitat de Valencia, and MA in Domestic and Gender Violence and MA in Human Rights, Democracy and International Justice from the same University. Currently, he is Associate Professor of Philosophy of Law and Human Rights at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain). His research focuses on gender-based violence, gender studies, queer theories, human rights, and refugee law. He has taken part in international conferences in Barcelona, Coimbra, Turku, Ljubljana, and Auckland, and he has published two books, and some papers on refugee law and gender-based violence, from a human rights perspective. He has been a Visiting Researcher at the University of Manchester, at the UC - Hastings College of the Law, at the Freie Universität Berlin and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Fernanda Milán

Fernanda Milan was the first transgender woman to be granted asylum in Denmark, following persecution in her home country of Guatemala. Having successfully campaigned for her own asylum with activists from various LGBT groups in Denmark and across Europe, Fernanda has gone on to co-found her own activism group, Trans-Project in Denmark. In her role she gives public speeches at other organizations and universities, raising awareness of the issues faced by trans women. She also volunteers for TalkTrafficking.org, blogging about human trafficking – a fate faced by many cis and trans women across the world.

Nina Nasim

Nina Nasim is the LGBTI Asylum Seeker Support Worker at UKLGIG. Nina provides one to one emotional support to vulnerable LGBTIQI+ people seeking asylum in the UK, and facilitates support groups for men, women, and trans*, intersex and gender non-binary asylum seekers. She also visits LGBTIQI+ asylum seekers in immigration detention centres to provide vital support. Nina has worked with asylum seekers and refugees for four years.

Pascale Navarra

Pascale Navarra is coordinator of the volunteering group QUEERAMNESTY Switzerland, a subgroup of Amnesty Switzerland. Their main issue is the support of LGB refugees in Switzerland. They have a tight collaboration with Transgendernetwork for T refugees.

Queer Amnesty supports around 35 new refugees every year, added to the past ones they have an experience of approximately 450 LGBT refugees supported by our volunteers. The support consists in individual contacts, language courses, yoga and swimming courses, 2nd hand bazaar for clothing, accompany to the migration interviews, networking with specific professionals, a monthly refugees café for LGBT only and hiking activities etc. All the work is done by volunteers.

Zeynab Peyghambarzadeh

In “Spectrum”, we are a small group of Iranian feminist activists, mostly based on Europe, working on variety of gender issues including bisexuality. Our work on bisexuality has different levels. At the

community level, our social awareness campaign with focus on Persian speaking audiences, has started in 2015. At the international level, we advocate for the right of bisexuals to seek asylum, since LGBT discussions among Iranians are mostly shaped under effect of asylum process. Zeynab has started her PhD on Iranian non-monosexuals seeking asylum in Turkey this September at the university of Huddersfield in the UK.

Miles Rutendo Tanhira

Miles Rutendo Tanhira is the Founder and Editor of Queerston Media an organisation working Transgender asylum seekers and newly arrived persons in Sweden. He is a journalist, feminist and transgender person from Zimbabwe, currently based in Sweden. Miles is an LGBT rights activist a trans* rights activist and a blogger. Miles was also one of the winners of the European parliament Intergroup on LGBT rights Go visible award . Miles has contributed several writings in LGBT rights and Trans* publications as well as News sites. He has experience in facilitating trainings on safety and security, leadership and wellness as well as creative expression and documentation. Miles is a photographer whose exhibition, T Bonds a documentation of transgender love as exhibited at Stockholm pride as well as Stockholm, trans festival. He has also directed the documentary (In) visible, (2014) narratives of LGBT asylum seekers in Sweden.

Samyar Shooshian

Sam Shooshian got refugee status in Hungary 3 years ago and he is originally from Iran. Sam is still trying to find a way to change his gender in his documents in Hungary. Sam is an activist in MigSzol (Migrant Solidarity), a grassroots group of immigrants, refugees, and Hungarians working for the political and social rights of refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Sam recently published a piece about his experiences as a trans refugee in Hungary on MigSzol's blog. He has worked as an administrative assistant at Central European University's Open Learning Initiative Department: Free weekend course for refugees and regularly works as an interpreter, including for a recent documentary about the refugee crisis.

Thomas Spijkerboer

Thomas Spijkerboer is professor of Migration Law at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, where he established the research group on migration law, which is nowadays one of the largest research groups on the issue worldwide. In 2010-2011, together with Sabine Jansen of COC Netherlands, he carried out the EU-funded research project Fleeing Homophobia. Asylum claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity in the EU. This project resulted in a report and an edited volume. Since 2013, he leads the research project Border Policies and Sovereignty. Human rights and the right to life of irregular migrants, funded by NWO. In addition, he functions as head of the NWO-funded research project Migration Law as a Family Matter, which was initiated by the late Sarah van Walsum.

Petra Sußner

Petra Sußner is working on a PhD project dealing with the (re)production of European identity through questions of gender, sexuality and asylum law (University of Vienna, Department of Legal Philosophy). She has published various articles, amongst them „Invisible Intersections: Queer Interventions and Same Sex Family Reunification under the Rule of Assylum Law“, a contribution to the edited volume resulting from the Fleeing Homophobia conference in 2011. Apart from that she is founding member and chairperson of „Queer Base, Welcome and Support for LGBTIQ Refugees“ (Vienna).

Maddalena Tacchetti & Paschal Bagonza

Maddalena is a PhD student at the University of Leicester Business and Management School; Paschal is a PhD student at the faculty of Health and Life Sciences, School of Applied Social Sciences, Division of Social Work, of the De Montfort University (Leicester). Both their PhD researches focus on the everyday lives and challenges of a group of LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees living in Leicester. They are among the main founders and volunteers of Pride Without Borders (PWB), which is a social enterprise based in Leicester entirely run by (forced) migrants and British volunteers, which provides support and advice to LGBT+ asylum seekers and refugees whose claim rests on their LGBT+ status.

Ashley Terlouw

Ashley Terlouw is professor of Sociology of Law and responsible for the Centre for Migration Law at the Radboud University (Nijmegen). She has worked a.o. at the Office of the District Court of The Hague (Aliens Chamber) and as head of the refugee department of Amnesty International the Netherlands. In 2003 she received a doctoral degree awarded by Radboud University. Her dissertation was about the cooperation between judges in alien affairs in terms of the sociology of law. From 2004-2008 she has been a member of the Dutch "Committee on Equal Treatment". From 2011-2016 she has been a replacement judge at the District Court of Gelderland (migration chamber). She has published in the area of Equal Treatment, the Administration of Justice and Migration Law. Her current research is in the area of discrimination on racial, nationality and religious ground. She is particularly interested in the tension between homogeneity and diversity. She has supervised research in the area of European Directives, Transnational legal space and currently PhD projects about legal aid in asylum procedures, the role of experts in asylum procedures, ethnic registration, how migration law judges deal with the principle of the best interest of the child and human rights defenders.

Leila Zadeh

Leila Zadeh is the Executive Director of UKLGIG. Leila came to the UK as part of a refugee family when she was 13 months old. She has spent most of her career working in international development. Prior to joining, she worked at the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, where her role included policy and advocacy on global LGBT rights.

Amani Zreba

Amani graduated from Law College in Tripoli, Libya and became an LGBTI activist after moving to Italy and asking asylum because of their sexual orientation and troubles with their family. Amani now is Editor and president of Quzah Libya LGBT group, a NGO that primarily focuses on LGBTIQ rights in Libya.

Organisations

Movisie

Movisie is the Netherlands centre for social development. Our mission is to promote the participation and independence of citizens by supporting and advising professional organizations, volunteer organizations and government institutions.

Five themes are central to our work: effectiveness; professionalisation; participation; combating and preventing domestic and sexual violence; social care.

Movisie aims to contribute to a society in which people are empowered to the maximum of their capability. Movisie is involved, demand-driven and results-oriented. We gear our services to the needs in our field of work. And we want our results to be measurable wherever possible, to make our contributions to society transparent. In our work we pay attention to the diversity of people to prevent exclusion of specific groups.

Movisie is a not-for profit organization. One of our major funders is the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. We work with a wide range of (care) institutions, foundations, provinces, other ministries and corporate businesses. Movisie also works together with local partners. Professionals are invited to make direct use of the knowledge and expertise of Movisie. We offer tailor-made advice and support in response to your specific queries and needs.

Many issues in the field of social development are not restricted to the Netherlands but are part of larger European, international and global trends. Movisie collects knowledge from abroad, to gain international inspiration for our work and to place developments in the Netherlands in a broader international context. This improves the quality of our work and strengthens our opportunity to support the work of other organizations nationally and internationally.

Movisie programmes share their strengths and capacities in international work. We build on the experiences of the Movisie partners with international projects. Movisie is a learning organization willing to work with partners in other countries and to share experiences in international cooperation. If you are interested in international cooperation or are looking for a partner in social development issues, please contact [Movisie international](#).

You can also [download](#) our corporate brochure.

Queer Base

Queer Base is an association connecting LGBTIQ persons from 22 different countries who has fleeing experience because of their sexual orientation and gender identity, with those who hasn't. Based in Vienna, Austria, Queer Base welcomes and supports LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees during and after their asylum procedure as they constitute a particularly vulnerable group and therefore have special needs.

Queer Base's central aim is to tackle homophobia and transphobia to guarantee the right of the LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees to an effective international protection, a fair asylum procedure and the right to personal integrity. The holistic approach of Queer Base is unique and covers all issues faced by LGBTIQ persons from the day they applied for asylum, by supporting people in housing issues, legal matters, health matters, by providing a social network within the LGBTIQ community, which helps them go through the asylum procedure.

The geographical diversity within Queer Base is one of its biggest assets on sharing best practices about how to tackle homophobia and transphobia in the different communities of origins but also on raising awareness through the redaction of country reports about the situation of LGBTIQ persons in several countries which impact very strongly the asylum procedure. The beneficiaries are involved in public relation, coordination and communication.

UKLGIG

The **UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG)** promotes equality and dignity for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) people who seek asylum in the UK, or who wish to settle here to be with their partners.

Around the world more than 70 countries consider homosexuality illegal, in five of these the death penalty can apply. Moreover, the persecution experienced by LGBTQI+ people goes well beyond any official prosecutions. The violence, humiliation, inequality and discrimination many LGBT people face, can be enacted by state officials, but is also often experienced within their own communities and families without any recourse to protection. UKLGIG assists LGBTQI+ people seeking a safe haven from persecution, and supports LGBTQI+ activists who are working to change the attitudes and legislation in their home countries.

Our asylum related activities include:

Supporting LGBT asylum seekers: providing emotional support & legal information referring to solicitors; visiting detention centres and running other social support projects.

Research & Policy: working to ensure LGBTQI+ people are treated equally and with dignity in the asylum process; seeking to improve the quality of Home Office decision making and seeking an end to the detention of LGBTQI+ people.

Training & Information: providing training and information on LGBTQI+ asylum issues.

We also continue providing support and information to LGBTQI+ people seeking to settle in the UK with their partners, via our website, an online forum and a monthly meeting.

The UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG) runs a unique support group for trans*, non-binary and intersex people seeking asylum. These monthly meetings are a vital service combatting isolation and providing psychosocial support, enabling individuals to come together from around the UK. UKLGIG has also worked with trans* victims of trafficking. UKLGIG also advocates for an end to the detention of trans* (and LGBT) asylum seekers, and better decision making in trans* (and LGB) asylum cases.